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ABSTRACT

A video tape treatment packet was developed and evaluated to determine its effectiveness in improving parents' ability to understand and more appropriately respond to instances of child misbehavior. The treatment tape consisted of a 65 minute discussion and elaboration of specific psychological principles in conjunction with simulated examples of parent-child communications. To measure the effect of the treatment, the PCIQ was developed to function as the dependent measure. The results of the study showed that the Ss of the experimental group showed significantly greater understanding of the child's hidden goal or motivation for behaving. No difference, however, was found between the groups in their ability to discriminate the more suitable verbal or behavioral response to make under the circumstances. It was shown that increased information and understanding doesn't necessarily result in better response modes. (Author)

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SIMULATION INSTRUCTION APPLIED TO CHILD MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

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A video tape treatment packet was developed and evaluated to determine its effectiveness in improving parents' ability to understand and more appropriately respond to instances of child misbehavior. Four video tape episodes (scenarios) were presented to a total of 44 Ss, all parents, 15 male and 29 female, who had been randomly assigned to an experimental and control group. A posttest control design was employed whereby the control Ss viewed eight stimulus scenarios recording their reactions on the Parent-Child-Interaction-Questionnaire (PCIQ) described below. Procedures for the experimental group were identical except for sequence of video observation. Specifically, the experimental Ss viewed a treatment tape prior to the eight stimulus scenarios.

The treatment tape consisted of a 65-minute discussion and elaboration of specific psychological principles in conjunction with simulated examples of parent-child communications. To measure the effect of the treatment, the PCI was developed to function as the dependent measure. The results of the study showed that the Ss of the experimental group showed significantly ($p > .05$) greater understanding of the child's hidden goal or motivation for behaving. No difference, however, was found between the groups in their ability to discriminate the more suitable verbal or behavioral response to make under the circumstances. It was shown that increased information and understanding doesn't necessarily result in better response modes.

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The purpose of this study was to develop and to evaluate a video tape treatment package and program employing a simulation technique designed to instruct parents to better handle the behavioral problems of their children. A number of studies (Prince, 1961; Russo, 1964; Straughan, 1964) have utilized techniques of parent-child psychotherapy. The methods used in these studies, however, did not permit complete investigation of what specific behaviors of the parent maintained or reduced the deviant behaviors of the child. Other studies (Williams, 1959; Brown and Elliot, 1965; Hawkins, et al., 1966) demonstrated generally that mothers can be trained to become effective behavior modifiers of their own children. The most effective and efficient methods to help parents relate more positively to their children affecting the latter's behavior change have not yet been determined.

This present study made use of simulation techniques in this complex area based on the validity of studies which utilized the techniques of simulation (Delaney, 1969).

Method

Subjects

The 44 Ss in this study were parents, all of whom had children between the ages of six and eight years. The 15 men and 29 women were between the ages of 26 and 47 years; had a total of 193 children ranging in age from three months to 22 years; and all had completed high school with 33 having had completed at least one year of college. All Ss were volunteer and were randomly assigned to either the treatment group (26 Ss) or to the control group (18 Ss).

Construction of the video tape

A video tape was developed containing four separate and independent parent-child interaction situations. These situations (scenarios) comprised the original test (transfer) packet following procedures generally set forth by Eisenberg and Delaney (1970). The actual viewing length of each test scenario ranged from two to three minutes. The actors for these were volunteer parents and children ranging in age from six to ten years. Each adult and child actor was given brief verbal instructions about the part he was to portray. Specific cues as to what to say and how to portray the scene were kept at a minimum in order to allow the actors to respond in a spontaneous manner. The four goals of a child's misbehavior, attention-getting, struggle for power, revenge, and withdrawal or demonstration of inadequacy (Dreikurs, 1964), were each portrayed in the situations.

Instrumentation

The construction of the Parent-Child-Interaction-Questionnaire (PCIQ) was made following a pilot project using 62 Ss from a different but similar population to those described in this study. Each pilot S was asked to describe: (1) what he would say to the child in the situation, (2) what he would do in the situation, and (3) what he considered to be the covert or hidden motivation of the child in the scene. Using a content analysis technique (Duverger, 1966) the PCIQ items were developed from these pilot responses. Three advanced students in clinical psychology were trained to decide the "degree of appropriateness" of these responses for each scene and to place them on a specified continuum from which subsequent scoring keys were developed.(1)

Procedures

A posttest-control group design was used. The 26 experimental Ss were instructed on the four goals of a child's misbehavior and given alternative ways of responding to the child's behavior as well as presented a discussion of the

probabilities of a child modifying his behavior as a result of this parental intervention. This instructional sequence was a part of the video tape package for the experimental group only. The 18 control Ss did not receive this instruction training. Both groups were instructed to complete the PCIQ on all four scenarios. The four scenario variables analyzed were: No. 2, representing the child behavior goal of revenge; No. 3, the goal of attention; No. 5, the goal of withdrawal; and No. 7, the goal of power, Scenarios No. 1, No. 4, No. 6, and No. 8 were used as "fillers."

The PCIQ was scored for each item on each main scenario variable and t-tests for independent samples were used to test for significance.

Results

1. There was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group in their ability to choose the more appropriate statement under the circumstances. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

2. There was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in their ability to choose the more appropriate action under the circumstances. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

3. There was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in their ability to choose the more appropriate statement and action under the circumstances. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 about here

4. Table 4 contains the summary data on the hidden goal concept. The experimental group scored statistically significantly different than the control group in their ability to determine the hidden goal of the child under the circumstances.

Table 4 about here

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that this video tape simulation package helped modify parents' ability to understand the behavior of the child and thereby identify the child's hidden goal or unconscious motivation for behaving. The treatment package and technique did not modify to any significant extent, the parents' ability to determine the more appropriate thing to say and do in the simulated situation. These results are noteworthy in that given the comprehensiveness and the limited amount of time, parents did change their perceptions of children's motivation. The implication for the counselor is that the technique described could serve as a useful adjunct to him when counseling with parents, teachers, or administrators regarding their particular problems in dealing with youngsters. The treatment package as demonstrated appears to provide the subject with a basic understanding of child misbehavior. Following the use of this or a similar package, the counselor may elaborate on the principles discussed and jointly discuss and determine with the client or groups of clients the most beneficial approach to actual child behavior modification under particular circumstances.

Footnote

(1) Copies of the P-C-I-Q and its related development material as well as copies of the video tape are available at cost from the author.

Table 1

Date of Statement Scores for All Ss

Scale	Experimental Group N	Control Group N	d.f.	t value
Statement				
Scene 2	26	18	42	-1.6506
Scene 3	26	18	42	.6282
Scene 5	26	18	42	-1.0292
Scene 7	26	18	42	-1.3676

Table 2

Data of Action Scores for All Ss

Scale	Experimental Group N	Control Group N	d.f.	t value
Action				
Scene 2	26	18	42	.6497
Scene 3	26	18	42	-0.9165
Scene 5	26	18	42	.1186
Scene 7	26	18	42	-1.7782

Table 3

Data of Statement-Action Scores for All Ss

Scale	Experimental Group N	Control Group N	d.f.	t value
Statement-Action				
Scene 2	26	18	42	-1.0014
Scene 3	26	18	42	-0.0699
Scene 5	26	.8	42	-0.7853
Scene 7	26	18	42	-1.8274

Table 4

Data of Hidden Goal Scores for All Ss

Scale	Experimental Group N	Control Group N	d.f.	t value	level of signif.
Hidden goal					
Scene 2	26	18	42	2.8439*	.01
Scene 3	26	18	42	-1.2808	.20
Scene 5	26	18	42	2.3237**	.05
Scene 7	26	18	42	2.4501**	.02

* $p < .01$

** $p < .05$

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